

# WEEKLY REFLECTIONS FOR Lent

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Second Sunday of Lent | 2021



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**  
— VICARIATE FOR FAITH & MISSION —

### First Reading: Gen. 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

Fr Nicholas King calls this story “the most chilling in the whole Bible”, and with good reason. You will notice from the references that we are just given excerpts from a much longer, drawn out account. This merely underlines its “chilling” nature, slowly building to a potentially dreadful climax.

After the double calling, “Abraham, Abraham,” we hear, for the first time in the Scriptures, the response, “Here I am.” Whenever we come across this response it is an indication of total surrender to God’s will on the part of the person speaking... and what “total surrender” is being asked of Abraham here! God’s promise to him of being a Father of many nations” is in jeopardy. Already he has banished his son, Ishmael, born to the slave Hagar, and now his son with Sarah, born in his old age is to be sacrificed. A parallel with the innocent suffering of Jesus has always been seen in the Story of the Sacrifice of Isaac. At the end Isaac is saved and the promise of having many descendants is once again renewed, as reward for his obedience. Jesus’ obedience leads, of course, to the redemption of all humankind, not just the tribal descendants of one man.

### Second Reading: Rom. 8:31-34

The first half of St Paul’s Letter to the Romans is reaching its climax in these verses. Paul has been writing about sin, forgiveness, justification and redemption for all people, not just the People of Israel, with whom God made the First Covenant. For Paul God’s selfless act of being willing to sacrifice his Son is a clear indication of his claim, “With God on our side who can be against us?” There is nothing that can ultimately negate this new Covenant.

### Gospel: Mark 9:2-10

The “inner circle” of disciples, Peter, James and John, are set apart from the others, as they were when Jesus cured Jairus’ daughter, and as they will be in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of Jesus’ arrest. They were amongst the first disciples that Jesus called to follow him, and they have been with him throughout the frenetic pace of his preaching ministry in Galilee.

A mountain is a good place from which to gain perspective of what lies around you. Going apart from the others, up a mountain, offers these three a certain perspective on what has been happening in the time they have been with Jesus. There he is with the main representatives of the Old Covenant – Moses, of the Law, and Elijah, of the Prophets – and the voice from heaven repeating the words used at Jesus’ Baptism, “This is my son, the Beloved.” At the Baptism the words were addressed only to Jesus himself, “You are my son, the Beloved,” now they are addressed to the three disciples, with the additional command, “Listen to him.” Peter is not sure what to say. It will take time for them to digest what they have experienced and to share it with the others.



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